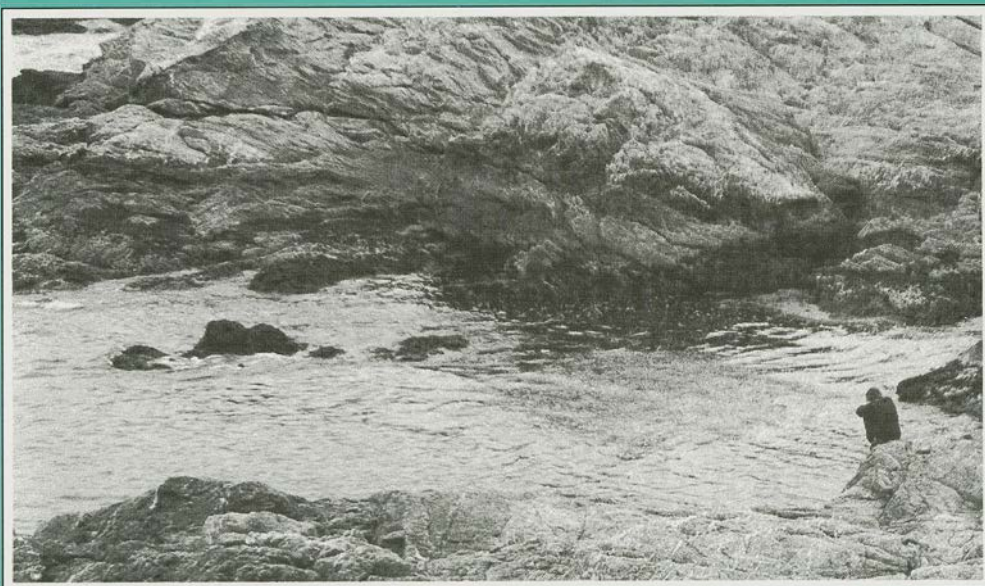


THE ALEMBIC



Spring 1994

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Spring 1994
Providence College

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THE ALEMBIC

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KRISTA NEWCOMB

At last,
an invisible,
invincible trail
into your dreams.

JANE LUNIN PEREL

Crying

I was always a cryer. My mother
said I sobbed, bit the apple, chewed
somehow managed to swallow, then sobbed again.
Sometimes it was novels. Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona*
devastated me, something about class and race separa-
ting lovers. I chewed and sobbed. Or gypsy
violins sent me into primal forests
where light pierced for the first
time through hoary evergreens
thick as owls' wings. Just as
the notes crescendoed inside
my thoracic cavity causing my heart
to collapse and rise somehow filled with
the same light, tears paisleying my face, mother
screaming "Turn Down The Hi Fi Now!" My father and I deaf
to her cries touching some place with our insides
we had never been before, while she stacked the plates.

RJ MCCAFFERY

Mornings at Home

My father's whore came out of the bathroom,
Moving quietly as if I was still asleep
Under the blankets in the living room.
In the morning she was almost pretty.
I liked the way she played with her hair
When she thought no one was watching.
Whispering against the silk robe
Her mother had given her for her birthday.
She always pulled it tight across her small stomach
Slid one hand inside to make the silk bulge
Something he would never allow to happen.
I thought of his mouth on her shoulders, her laughter.
Of his not knowing what to do with
An unexpected day off from work;
I think I would have told her
How he sneered with his friends
On the phone, how he told all her secrets.
We all knew how she loved
Strong hands, hard mouths.

R.J. MCCAFFERY

Clawfoot

leaning against a sweating wall
anointing his feet with oil

his body falls
into his unclean bathtub

so a man's memory will fail
my sons, he thinks

how many were there?
how long till one finds me?

*

Closet bounded, having dismantled
their fraternity at the rumor of his death
they have a long journey ahead.

The waistcoat speaks, "We must continue to serve
as we have. Evenly, all of us must go
to sons and daughters in the most egalitarian
way possible under such sad circumstance".
Listlessly swaying, the lavender tie knows
his prospects of becoming a headband are good if
the daughters get him. The dinner jacket
fills the silence, "Any way you chose
to view the situation, esteem for clothing has been
growing larger and larger, these temporary
relocations are nothing. I am sure we will all be usefully
employed for the common good." The bandanna
smiles at the news, viewing his stains.

But the brown shoe, "Bullshit, prettyboy, someone is
always gonna want you". "Not true", pipes up
one cufflink that always speaks for the pair,
"if that were so, would we all be here now?"
and in nervous rustle, the white shirt:
"Which of us do you think
will go down with him?"
The most junior of the jackets quivers,
having only been worn once,
how can she speak?
and the two black boots, they sneer, traveled,
they do not waste time
making agreements.

*

among the creaky waterstains on the floor, exposed
next to the window, are boxes of diplomas
letters received, bowling trophies
and rising like a barge keel
the bulk of a piano

with his yellowed, golfballed eyes an uncle
surveys, full of the tactility reserved
for executors

he sits at the piano, massaging the bridge
of his nose, wondering which of the little shits
left the window open

he turns to the keyboard, hands
in silent benediction
over the skewed, warped teeth
they hang there those hands
they hang there forever.

RAY JORDAN

La Petite Mort

for Brian Schorn

The doctor
orders
quiet, but the toll
of the curfew bell
has been predetermined.

Here on the equator,
an unkept secret
is gravity-graced,
a falling star.

I grasp that
it couldn't all be
(What has gotten
into you?) an ear
disorder,
 argue
that my height
is twice the length
of my shadow,
 prick up
at the slightest
sound.

RAY JORDAN

A Giving

we walk proud where we are almost too close
our scars communicate to our ritual these faults
language becomes fault out of mouths
so ears partake of this talk of our own
into no other's to each used
of each by other

*This poem has taken the words used in "A Giving,"
by Pam Rehm (Green Zero c 1990) and reordered
them; all the words from Rehm's poem have been
used, none added.*

ANDREW MCCARTHY

A Brief Moment in History

There were not many things that Ogden liked to do more than to go outside into his backyard at one o'clock in the morning on a cold snowy night, when the snow is soft and smooth, natural and divinely pearl white, untouched by stumbling boots, and stand at the side of his house, stare out into the woods and small hills beyond, and smoke a cigarette. A mysterious innate sixth sense would tell him that his parents were asleep, and whether his mother would randomly venture downstairs to catch him smoking outside. He had never been caught, and strove to endure a hope that he never would in the future. But such unimportant trivialities were ignored on such an extraordinary night like this one, where the slowly drifting snow morsels cling to his hair and wool sweater like tufts of feathery down, and the smoke he blows from his mouth shoots out upwards like a geyser, painting the purple sky, and everything around him—the tall trees and long meadows and wooden fences and bushes—is enrobed in the thick powdery snow, illuminating all of nature with its silver phosphorescence, giving it a cool vibrancy, a crystalline, idyllic perfection.

And Ogden stands amidst this marvelous wintry quintessence, lifting the cigarette to his mouth in slow, dramatic movements, the cigarette tucked into the crux between his left middle and index finger, living there snugly for a brief moment in history, and ephemeral element sparked to life with a whimpering flame that envelops and buckles the tightly packed tobacco, giving it an unseen impetus to burn the grand and gargantuan atmosphere surrounding it, and it sizzles and continues to burn, and shorten, always closer to its death, yet raging fervently, leaving its smokey mark in the air, only to drift away, to disappear from a thick swirling opaque mist to an invisible dead nothingness. The cigarette will eventually die out, its life extinguished in the ground and tossed away to erode within nature's giant cyclical womb.

Ogden enjoyed smoking in moderation within a certain milieu because the cigarette would assume a distinct taste according to his situation, and the more comfortable his situation, the nicer the smoke would slide into his lungs, and then ease up and out again in a bluish gray stream. Withdrawing to his pastoral and biting cold backyard uplifted him, inspired to wonder, imagine, and above all, to feel. Something within the blueblack briskness motivated him sensually. He stands like a speck under the purple sky, secluded in his huge backyard, surrounded by the arabesque wilderness, by the mistake of the miles of smooth white meadows, by the whole uproarious fairyland of America. He imagines the highways and cities that lay around him in the night that he has neither seen nor felt yet in his seventeen years of somewhat inexperienced adolescence, and for a few flickering moments that are born from the fusion between his soul and the idyll about him, he sees himself. Simply sees himself, at the nexus of his existence always alive. And he knows. An amorphous an incoherent knowledge that makes all sense in the universe to him: of the lyrical violence and danger...roguish feats...passion and nobility...consensual enigma and abstruse condition...of man...and life.

His mind whispers a rugged Ahhhhhhhhhhhh!

Ogden does not shift from the luminous enchantment, and he moves his thoughts from romantic metaphysics to other things. Of girls in jeans and sweaters and clogs, buoyant yet scrupulously serene, serious and composed yet inherently daring and lascivious...blonde hair and chestnut eyebrows and a rosiness of svelte lips...waterfalls of wine-red hair and flashing eyes of verdancy...casually smoking cigarettes with subtle erogenous panache, lightly holding a beer with pink hands and laughing outrageously at things Ogden says...divine round racks of foamy flesh...mmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm...smelling so lushly good, the scent that seems to naturally linger on most girls, throughout their clothes, hair and moon-brilliant skin, although each scent particular, distinguishable, and equally as inebriating...He thought of artists to emulate...ideas for stories ...the compact, fantasmagoric worldpool of poetry...of the other-dimensional lunacy and jocose madness of his

friends...Things that were good...things that made him happy.

The cigarette dwindles to a brown nub, and Ogden therapy of the moment is completed as he stomps through the snow, up his dark back steps into the silent warmth of his house. And so, anytime—whether in the all boys prep school he attends or sitting alone in his attic room or driving alone with the stereo broken—he felt stagnant, immutable, confused or suppressed in the shadows, he thought of smoking butts in his backyard, in the luminescence of nature's crystal icing, on the threshold of his life, the verge of experience and spiritual movement, and consequently could recognize, beyond the dark gothic window of his vision, in the midst of a macabre wilderness, the pulsing and primal droning silhouette of a burly hope.

ANDREW MCCARTHY

Rough Beast on the Darkling Plain

The sky was a misty purple: not completely dark, leaving a massive canvas for the silhouette of the trees that ruffled in the sudden brisk wind, entirely casting off this seemingly relentless heat of the past day. The moon was nowhere to be seen, and the stars, like little glowing tabs of astral LSD, were eaten by the violet sky which gradually increased the force of its foreboding breath. The air was cool and crisp, but the origin of its gust lurked in a dimension sentient beings are nonexistent, a place neither safe nor dangerous, of void of nature that is aware of Man's presence, but does not wish to acknowledge him.

The leaves of trees begin to jiggle and pop off, flapping violently in miniature tornadoes of green, brown, yellow, and dark red. Twigs, branches, and tree trunks snap and rip, giving in indifferently to the invisible blows of pounding wind, tearing through the air to land in Manmade driveways and sidewalks, wet paved streets, undulating meadows, and, of course, the windshields of moving cars, reminding the selfish driver, of the vicious and ambiguities of caprice.

The crackle of thickets and leaves rises, ascending in a whistling bustle and then lowering to a smooth hisssssssssssss. The air undulates ominously, and far off somewhere in a rustic Puritan hamlet a loud bell rings, and way beyond babies are heard wailing for comfort within the membranous security of suburbia, for they can sense the danger inherent in the storm with more acuity than their shaky parents, who, everywhere, begin to THUD! their windows shut and SLAM! their doors closed, and maybe even some risk-takers shut the lights off, letting the glare from their rented video on the T.V. screen blend with the violet dusk that permeates from outside into everybody's home everywhere. Men race home to the warmth of their wives, before the rain starts, and fearless children by a forest brook decide to heroically challenge the formidable weather until the first BOOM of thunder knocks them off their sneakered feet, rattles

their hearts and gives them a valid impetus to run like hell home to the light of their bedrooms. Dogs cower in the corner of houses, hoping to get lost in the dark to shiver and whimper alone until the horror subsides; families hope that the power is not eradicated by Mother Earth's wrath: the electric power that is their only chance of safe modern stability, order, sanity. Somewhere an old scholar quotes Blake and recalls *Oedipus at Colonus*, and young American mystic soothsaying prophets pass joints back and forth, drink beer and chain-smoke by Medieval candlelight while blazing with personal insight into the grandiose resonance of the apocalypse. Airplanes passing over the East coast struggle and stagger through the terribly turbulent night, with soft-featured women and iron-jawed men, trembling parents and teeth-chattering paranoiacs and hard-drinking, sweaty back businessmen, young fist-clenching travelers and huddling lovers all meshing into one universal mind: Death crawls into the thoughts of everybody like a silent, cloudy, amorphous demonic apparition...

THE VOMIT GOD

The cow sat on me
Next to the fence
The cool wind blowing
Down like a cow sac.
"What?" I screamed to the cow.
"I want to sit on your head," he replied.
The cow yawned and swallowed me whole.
"Yes," I said. "It feels good to be warm,"
The cow burped.

COLIN BAERMAN

Wind

The Mountain
Spoke to the
Blue lake
because
of thirst
BUT
Freud felt the
Mountain
was sexually
Turned on and
needed some wet relief
like a Bronx summer
Fire
IN
Red August.

COLIN BAERMAN

NAPKIN ON WOOD

Feel
The Sharp
Taste
Of Chewing
Ice
Like
My
Teeth
Disappearing Down
A
Dentist's
Private Green Toilet
The sound
of the
Flush
makes me
imagine
A
waste dump
in
the city
Where hopeless
workers
lacking lotion
question the
Philosophy of
Basketball
from the
view of an
angry lion
Their eyes

Hollow drums move
like bowling pins
where
Noise
echoes in the eardrum
making the cilia
limp
like a mentally deficient
Luster carnal
who has a physiological
communication break
he can only enjoy the
images on the telephone
It was great when
he was younger
but now his bones
have ossified and weakened
Soon his dust will
make my furniture ancient
and the dinosaur piss
will make it modern
Clean
Alive
like my
thoughts in the
Mornings
Dreams wake me
at three
every
nightfall
So I

glow in
the darkness
of noon,
The sun is
always a friend
that visits
on Saturday
while Sunday
is a day
full of
Beer Catsup
and Sleep.
The week
is slow and the
conversation
dies
But the scenery
holds no
frustration
but
just hidden
happiness

Turn
on my
television
my
private
image box
by opening
the drape
The same film
is on every night
except one night
there was more
sound and water
I
smiled as my hair played
with the laws of
electricity the dream
world came again as I was
confronted with my
mother volcanoes
friends
and the elephant man

JOCELINE CHAMPAGNE

						L
					E	I
					F	N
	F				FRANK	
	L	R			O	E
DISCOVERY				TAPERED	D	
R	S		D	R	T	
T	T		HOLE	U		
I	L			MISSING		
N	E	C		O	T	
KISSING	SILLY		REBUILT			
N	S	E	E	I		
O		GONE	H	S		
W		C	E	H		
I		H	A	E		
N		EXTENDED	D			
G		D	E			
			D			

BILL THOMAS

I had a bird's eye view of hell once
I was in my cage with silly putty bars
I looked out to the swirl
and things dripped
Water and colors

Time lost in a limbo sky
"what time is it?"

Morning, because I just woke up.
Others have always been awake
Some can do nothing but sleep.

I try, but always wake and feel like I
have to justify the hourless day.

Sort of fill in the blanks

The sky gives no indication that it is awake
It blinks its lazy eye on and off

Today, it is off

If it were drier,

I could pretend that the sun was wrapped in cotton,
But my reason tells me it's just rainy

(anuclear Winter is what my anxiety tell me.)

No Hope.

Why walk on a day like this?

go back to sleep

But I'm not tired

Is it day? No, today has no time.

What's for lunch? Nothing, I'm not Hungry

There's nothing in the fridge and i will starve

I don't own this day

Nothing belongs to the swift

and the meek aren't gonna' inherit shit

Without time we own nothing

The Sun throws at us days that don't have time,

and we try to keep operating, as if it counts.
I don't care either way, because I wake up whenever I want,
So Fuck You.

BILL THOMAS

Some may feel responsible for *whatthe* world does
 theworld operates without me

I shadow it, and I don't want it to see me.

Once the world sees you, it will eternally make
you a servant, with the belief that you are
 a master

Master of what? Who wants dominion over guilt?

I have no inclination to want anything
that a hopeless world tells me what I want.

Sometimes when I walk at night, I remember when
 I hoped.

Yeah I hoped, I could hope.

-anything could fill this space-

Not just anyone tells.

 Not just anyone can tell.

Memories are like water.

They keep dripping Away.

Away into realms never to be visited by me.

 I wonder where they collect.

Dive into the pool of memories,

and wash your head in thoughts with feelings long and forgotten

I remember when I used to want.

What for?

 The things I wanted would lead to prestige and fame,
-not happiness.

Happiness is not a guarantee,
nor is it known by me.

Keep smiling. Everything's Perfect.

Everyone's perfectly fooled
because everyone's a perfect fool.
Why do I presume I'm any better. I'm not.
Myself is shallow and drowning.

-7 tenths of the world is covered by water-
what is left in our oceans that we have forgotten

"Please, get me a drink, I'm thirsty," she says/.
"Do you have any aspirin?, I feel shitty," he states like
Too many nights I've spent trying to forget, and every
headache represents another lost memory. It worked.
Goodbye my cool drink of solace,
I am without land to stand on.

-Michael Stipe is a sensitive floor scrubber too

MICHAEL KELLY

Tuesday

There's a scratch on my stomach
and it's keeping me
away into the awake.

At 5:00 AM the heat goes on
in the building.

Exploding Iron is what i like to call it.
And its noise won't let me sleep either.
Every day I don't sleep
is like a fight that didn't happen.

I seem to forget that I'm Irish
and the Irish don't sleep.

God is in my blankets.
My pillow is a block of lead.

The bugs are happy,
they have company.

The garbage man is
swearing at the trash cans,

He's no fairytale story,
But he'll do just fine.

MICHAEL KELLY

Winter

holy man came and
burned my bills
right out of my wallet.
He has not tactful insight
into the future
like the fifth grade
bully who wrote beautiful
5th grade poems
to the green and yellow 5th grade girl.

My throat is thirsty
I drink a glass of sand,
there's an ocean in my stomach
and Jesus is tending his flock.

MICHAEL KELLY

ROSES

time swallows my hands
and puts them next to the rainbows
in a dusty hope chest
under the steamy cellar window

PORTFOLIO

UNTITLED

Kavita Avula



LIGHTING A BOWL

Michael Kelly



UNTITLED

Kavita Avula



UNTITLED

Kavita Avula



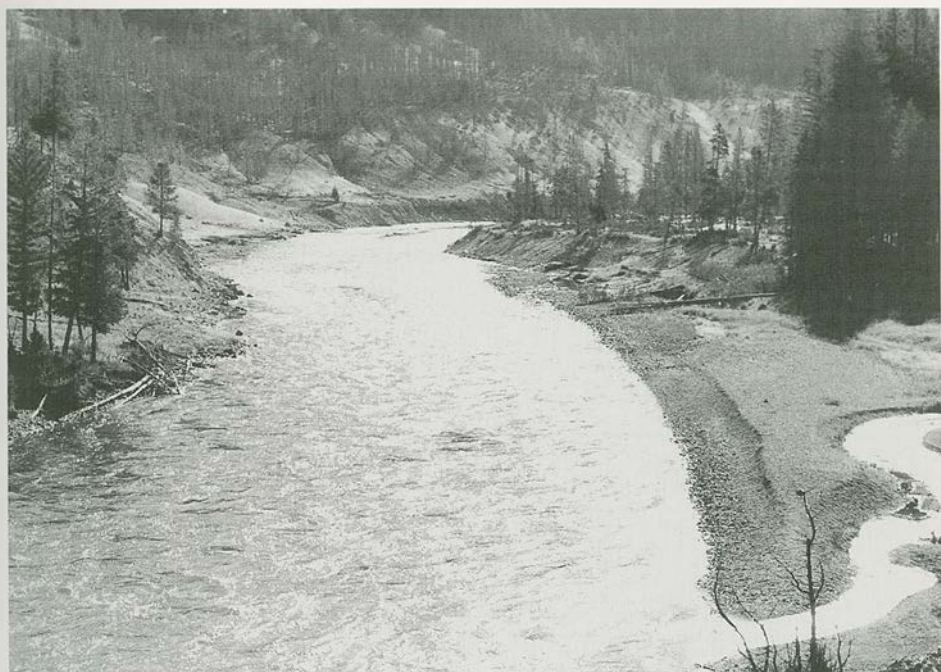
UNTITLED

Kavita Avula



OUTLET

Holly Thompson



UNTITLED

Kavita Avula



more and fiction poetry
and fiction poetry more
fiction more and poetry
poetry fiction and more
more fiction and poetry

ROBERT W. PLANTE

My Father's Shirt

The shirt was hidden on the second rack. Its hook, missing the bar, had slipped down and rested on another hanger. This shirt was the last known survivor of the purge that had taken all of the (unspoken) father's belongings and had cast them out into the darkness. That ignominious day when he left six years ago, was still celebrated symphonically by her mother, with the slamming of doors, crashing of pans, kicking of chairs and accompanied, in dulcet tones, by the usual muttered obscenities.

Jill had seen the shirt out of the corner of her eye, like some spectre, and turned away rather than toward, not wanting to believe that it could really be there and very afraid that it might. She was conducting a purge of her own, on this, her last day at home before leaving for art school. Her mother's instructions were clear: Get rid of all those things that you will never wear again, and leave a few nice things behind for your home (Hope it will be soon!) visits. Jill interpreted these instructions somewhat liberally: Take the nice things with you, leave some 'okay' stuff behind, since there's no one special here anyway and (Mom's right!) dump the rest. The sight of the shirt threw her.

She glanced around her room. Squares, of what looked like new paper, dotted the walls, showing the effects of sun and dust on daisy and rose wallpaper. These ghostly patches, haze on the edge of vision, tricked the senses into creating new forms, like the images in half remembered dreams. The paintings, which recently hung there, now lay safely packed in boxes, stacked next to her suitcases. The pictures, save one, had hung there since elementary school and now were moving with her to college. The lost one, his portrait, was tossed into the basket when he left. Her mother replaced it with a picture of a Norwegian Brown rat. Jill wasn't amused and took it down weeks later.

"What about supper tomorrow?" shouted Mom up the stairs, as if long distance conversations here were normal.

"We'll eat in Bennington on the way." She shouted back.

Her Mom's reply was lost in the transmission from the kitchen, through the living room. She went to the closet again, moved some shoes and sneakers around, and tossed some that she would never wear walking or hiking in the mountains of Vermont.

Jill stood, looked away, sighed and looked into the closet again. a small dab of yellow paint stained the right cuff. It was the only mark on her father's blue shirt. For the first time she was curious about its age. When he gave her the shirt she didn't know or even care if it was new or old. Now she wondered. Pulling it off the hanger, she looked at the shirt and smiled, it was new.

The memory flooded over her, she sank down onto the bed and lay back, clutching the shirt to her. It was snowing. She was nine, and this was her first art class at the RISD Paint Box Program. She, flustered with the last minute details of: what to bring, where to go, when to leave, where was her snack, ('cause she'd be starving), and on and on, ran around until finally they were late and he shooed her out the door. It was their Sunday ritual. Dad would take her to whatever class, pick her up, and watch her perform, if he could. Every Saturday, for ten months, she would either go to skating, gymnastics, swimming, (the dreaded) piano lessons, or to (her love) art class.

She jumped breathlessly out of the car, raced up the walk to the door, her arms full with her art stuff, and then stopped, horrified. She turned hoping he would still watching her, 'wouldn't leave until he couldn't catch sight of her pigtails' promise. She had forgotten a shirt. They wouldn't let her paint without the shirt! He was still there, watching, smiling, and he got out of the car when he saw her panic.

"Hurry, hurry!" She cried. "We've got to go back."

"No, there isn't time."

She cried and sagged into him, clutched him, disappointed, desperate to paint, and to be a part. She scrambled into the car, searching for a shirt or any coverall. He watched, and then took off his parka and his shirt. The snow falling gracefully around them. Jacob's mother walked quickly by, seeming not to notice, but Jacob made a face and circled his ear with his finger. She looked at her

father again, the snow speckled his skin. He gave her the shirt and put his jacket back on. She hugged him and ran up the walk. Later, he'd joke about giving her the shirt off his back. She turned at the corner and waved. He blew her a kiss. The shirt hung lost in her closet.

There was no wake or funeral when he left, but to them he died when he walked out the door. Jill was devastated. She refused his calls, letters, and even the judge's entreaty to see her.

"He's dead. We don't need him."

His letters still came but they were either returned or thrown out.

Now this Lazarus shirt had returned. She was leaving, this house and this life, alive though.

She heard the phone ring twice, then stop. It was her grandmother calling, asking them to stop by for a last visit. It would be her last chance to see the family until Thanksgiving break. She balled the shirt and shot it at the basket. It missed and sprawled on the floor.

"We just need to stop by for a little while," her mother said before the question was asked. "You know you're her favorite grandchild."

"Sure." Jill poured a glass of milk from the refrigerator, grabbed a couple of fresh baked, Tollhouse cookies and sat side saddle on a chair. The kitchen was immaculate, the only traces of baking was the warm plate of cookies. In fact the entire house was immaculate, except for her room. Newspapers were read by 7 p.m. and disposed of by 7:52. Dinner, breakfast and the occasional lunch plates virtually disappeared into the dishwasher as soon as the eater finished. She remembered seeing a movie where a man got out of bed to go to the bathroom and found his bed made when he got back. Like Jill, her long departed (read dead) father always left traces of himself throughout the house. She wondered when her mother had time to do all of this tidying, and now realized she did little else. There was no chance of anything being out of place, her mother had swept him out of their lives. Only a darkened square on her wall and this one shirt remained.

"Well I guess I'll be busy taking care of this place, and I've got

to work some overtime." She patted Jill's hand. "I need to help you with those tuition payments and get some of the extra things you'll need when you're living away. It takes Hillary Foss just hours keeping up with Missy and ..." Her voice droned on as Jill looked away.

This place reminded her of one of those famous sea captain's homes she had seen in Mystic. They always looked well preserved as if the family had just left after a company of housekeepers had cleaned. There were no traces of the character of the occupants, no slippers left out, no half-read papers lying on the couch, no half-eaten sandwiches on a table, and no warmth. The kitchen but not the cooking. She reached for another cookie but they were gone.

"Oh, sorry hon. Did you want more? I wrapped them up for you." She stood.

"No, that's okay." She looked around wondering how her mother had accomplished that trick. "I should finish packing so we can visit." She stood and hugged her. "I love you Mom."

"Me too, hon." Her voice huskier now, she tightened the embrace, then stepped back, smiled and squiggled her nose, "You're some pretty terrific kid."

She looked around the room. Her traveling clothes lay on the other twin, the guest bed. Boxes of books and stuff lay on the carpet near the door. The sprawled shirt lay near the basket, arms outstretched as if seeking an embrace. "It used to be huge," she thought, "now it was just average." Hanging around, like a half empty glass of milk waiting for the drinker to return. She opened her suitcase, picked up the shirt and buried it under her clothes.

STEPHEN O'CONNELL

Lying in the Grass

Clinging
to the tenuous
watering of sunlight
down through tree
shadows and
pink white buds,
I feel the iron
loosen,
truculence
bend,
and the grass
soaks
into my skin.

STEPHEN O'CONNELL

The Bog

Harsh wind and tiny raindrops
melt my curly hair
into a matted mess
on this prehistoric tundra.
My neck shrinks into
the dirty denim of my jacket
as caked black sod
clings to my boots.
"The work needs doing"
says my uncle,
breaking the ocean
of wind and silence.
My brother and I
bend to it,
picking up the moist
funnel shaped clods
standing them tepee style
to allow the chill breeze
to sweep them dry.
All the work done by hand and back,
I pause to stretch
and to pick the black dirt
from under my fingernails
and I remember
that my grandfathers bent to this work
and so did their grandfathers
and gazing down from this mountain bog
onto the valley below with its poor soil
I realize that a circle of
soil has defined me

The dark showers and wind

continue unabated
 as I work silently,
 looking forward to
 the musty turf fire
 roaring in my grandmother's oven
 warming the pot of too-strong tea
 that waits for me.

CARYANN SCULLEY

I Found It In The Wall

Blueberry-green, Matisse lilypads drift in circles.
The frogs see their thrones sneak away;
frogs enjoy mountains but they get lost there.

As nomads they travel the dry world map
leaving a webbed foot print on every state.
They decide to stay in the crazy colored, whacked out,
psychedelic place;
that was all they could find.

What day is today? It doesn't matter to a fat faced frog.
Every path is intrinsically weaved and laced with adventure
so I know that someday the frogs will find
their own frog freeway.

CARYANN SCULLEY

Me Lo Contró La Pared

Verdeazules nenúfares matisse flotan en círculo.
Las ranas les gustan las montañas pero allí se extravián.
Como nómades andan por el mapa seco del mundo
dejando en cada estado su palmípeda huella.

Deciden quedarse en el vapuleado
lugar sicodélico de locos colores;
fui lo único que consiguieron.

¿Qué día es hoy ?, qué le importa a una rana de cara gorda.
En sí, todo camino se entrelaza en la aventura
por ello sí que un día las ranas van a hollar
la autopista de la rana.

CARYANN SCULLEY

Recurring Nightmare

In a tube twirling, spinning
The grinning black sea sucks her into its circles of death.
Neon fish with apricot eyes offer no help.

My mother sits in that tube,
I can see her.
Fearful she sits in that tube,
I can't help her.
Terrified she sits in that tube,
she can't hear me.
My lips move,
but I can't make a sound.

Night closes in like a stalker on a victim,
the sharks are done eating.
The rippleless waves crash everywhere,
and carry that tube to nowhere.
The neon fish are hunted by toothless, pastel ones.

My mother is still in the tube,
I can see her.
A purple fish in her mouth,
an orange fish in each hand.
The half crescent moon flitters behind
a great ball of clouds like
a turtle creeping
under its rock.

I can't see my mother anymore.
Is she in paradise
or have the fish devoured her?

JOEL PACE

Wondrous leaves drape their jade against the
Sinuous limbs which are made brown
By the magic of thee fair faerie
Melody.

Continuous laughter cascades to
Cavernous shadows which shade the ground
where the traveller laid in melancholy
malady
bourne from afar
by the hope of
finding some star
a relic of
the magic of romance
arisen by your glance
from the tragic trance
so to dance
with this nymph
of the breeze
this angelic relic
of romance descended
from the pleiades.

JOEL PACE

Final Prayer

My brother	the tree how lovely	you are
In	your crooked crevices	the carpenter
Travels to	visit the resident	queen.
Sister river	where will you go	how far?
You stay	yet leave	eternal traveller
Always still	by your moving banks	of green.
Come mother moon	with your litter	of stars.
Your silver scythe	of light,	night's harbinger
Reaps life.	seal my eyes	now that I have seen
Such desecration	in the land of	dreams

My father grant me this
Final prayer that I may
Be buried with my true
Family, among the
By the cool river
And under the moon and
May I like your sun, rise
Again, in the form of
A tree, which will grow
Over my grave and serve
As my headstone and as
your cornerstone upon
Which to build a new world
And may this tree have a
Bird's nest as its halo
Leaves as feathers for its
Wings and a flowing robe
Of green ivy. So shall
I be a chorister
In your choir of angels
Which shall sing your praises
As long as you make your
World's rivers to flow, sun
Stars and moon to shine, trees
To grow and people to
Know when to say Amen!

SIOBHAN FALLON

The moon, that splinter in the heavens,
oozes icy light across the sky
as it coldly watches her

and my prayers accost the marble ears
of dead angels nestled at the bosom
of a nonexistent God

while the shining girl who once told me
that the moon is beautiful and God is good
soundlessly swallows a handful of pills
and slips away on a flat blue line.

JUDITH COLONNA

The Pronoun

He always says he loves me. Sure, I believe him. He always says he wants to marry me. Sure, who else could I meet? He always puts his arms around me and kisses me tenderly. I like that. But when I am alone, I think about him and wonder what it would be like to be with him? He is so mysterious and dark. He has brown hair and I like that. The only problem is he always ignores me. I can never really look into his eyes. I could never tell him, either. If I had one wish, just one wish, I don't know what it would be. I have always had that problem.

He always takes me out with him. Sure, that's really sweet. He always pays my way. Sure, how else could I do anything? He always holds my head in his hands and stares tentatively into my eyes. I like that. But when I am standing alone in the corner of the room, I think about being there with him and wonder what it would be like to be there with him!? He dresses well and I like that. He is always dancing with other girls. I hate that. I can never dance with him; he would never allow it. If I had one hope, just one hope, I don't know what it would be. I have always had that problem.

He always calls me every night. Sure, I often get bored. He always visits me after he calls. Sure, who else would I watch TV with? He always caresses my legs and asks to sleep with me. I hate that. But while we're in bed and he is inside of me, I think about him. I think about what it would be like to have him really inside of me. He always calls out my name. Sure, it makes me feel important. He always asks me to call out his. I don't want to in case I do call out his. He pleases with me to call out his name. I give in and call his name. He gets up and while standing there, dripping wet; he always slaps me before he leaves.

JENNIFER CERRITELLI

Letting Go

I
am the
smallest of the
Matreshka dolls made to fit
neatly inside you, complement you
my arms, legs, and head made to rest
inside you. No, my wooden head,
hand painted, is not smaller
and does not lodge
within yours.
Instead,
it grows so that
one of my hand painted eyes
busts through your hand painted face and
hand painted smile. Do not scold me for outgrowing you,
But, nurture the intricate doll that may one day become the
largest of the Matreshkas and will seek to enclose you if,
and only if, you do not encase me.

JENNIFER CERRITELLI

The World's A Circus with Sex, Tears, Sin and Crap

When the child asks where he came from
tell him "one night of vulgar sex"
and that's all you know

When the child asks why babies cry
tell him "they mourn for the lost cord of safety"
and that's all you know

When the child asks why people are mean
tell him "sin is a virtue"
and that's all you know

When the child asks why ocean water is blue-green
tell him "first it was blue, but seagulls crap"
and that's all you know

Finally,
when the child asks you to take him to the circus
tell him to go to hell or
just take a look around

JOHN SULLIVAN

HAVE
YOU

EVER

SEEN

A

LEAF

ACTUALLY

H
C
N

FROM THE

BR E AK

BRA
AND

FALL?

STEM

ITS

SEEN

WATCH IT

L T E
F U T R

NO

D
O
W
N

TO

THE

GROUND?

BRIAN ALLARD

On The Edge of Concrete Dream Time

"Those stories were a good read, they were dumb as well."

Harriet Wheeler

On the edge: on the edge of red- a tartan flannel and the origami birds having multicolored from a light string, iridescent and violent. Violent like a new butterfly chrysalis on an elm branch.

Concrete dreams: dreams like an old man, haggard on a maroon picnic table in the rain. Concrete and cold like a breath.

Or dreams of falling through the empty air and sea, wind and rain blowing wet against a bone-white jaw. Or rivulets of grey ocean dripping with freezing precision toward the faraway strand.

Dream time: like a priest in fire, he burns like a scab.

My dog used to sleep in the street. He was small and black. A Shi-Tsu. He was too friendly: a neighbor found him cold and bleeding. The car didn't even stop.

Time for dreams: sitting in class. We're discussing Richard Wright. Communist Manifesto. Proletariat vs. Bourgeoisie. The inequality of races. Lenin. Revolution. Etc. Etc. -My ankles are cold. Why? I forgot to wear pants. Oh yeah. Everybody's laughing- I shouldn't do that anymore..

Dreams are concrete: You try to wake up as a psychopath presses the jagged knife to your chest-but you can't. This is dream time. Concrete as the womb, real like an abortion.

You are here- you won't be leaving soon. The theater is just opening now. This is only a matinee: there are three more shows (5:30, 7:45, and 10:00.) You have a ticket, I've bought you some popcorn.

The edge is on: it's dull and chipped, but it still cuts.

It's maintained the crucial sharpness. It still slices and

dices, murders and creates. "In a moment there is time for decisions and revisions which, etc. etc. ellipses.." Thank you very much Mr. Eliot, or should I call you Doctor? You know that no one can read Sanskrit.* You're showing off again, T.S.*

I loved that black and white dog. Shi-Tsu. Everyone called it "shit-zoo." They loved it too, though. They would stop in our yard, bending over to pet her. "Good girl, Heidi," they'd say in the same tone of voice that people use to address babies. The driver of that black sedan didn't stop, though. He didn't care.

On the edge of dreams, there is a time where everything is concrete. There is a safe place here. Just me and my dog...

BRIAN ALLARD

The Fishing Trip

The stain darkened boards of the old dock creaked as Jon walked out toward the sunset. Looking down, Jon noticed the familiar, old knot-holes. Pointing his index finger at a large knot, Jon cocked his thumb like he used to. "Bbbaaanngg!," even after twenty-five years, Jon still liked to shoot those holes when nobody was looking. Picking up a stone by the mooring posts, he cocked his arm the way his father showed him and threw. The horizon was bright with the purple-raspberry color of dusk. The rock broke the smooth plane of the water, sending concentric circles back toward the dock.

Jon thought of when he and his father would go fishing. As they would approach the beach, mist would be on the water and the dock wood was always wet. He could still remember jumping from one knot-hole to the next on the way out to the moored rowboat. He could usually make it about half way down the dock before his father would yell at him.

"Jon, stop that God-damned jumping."

As a child, Jon could never understand how something like "the jumping game" could anger his father so much. He remembered the dark purple bruises that his arms would collect when he played too many "games". Jon was older now. He would never make the same mistakes that his father did.

Turning around, Jon began to walk back to the cottage. The smell of pine needles made him want to take off his shoes, like he used to. He had his work boots on though and they were too tight to easily remove.

At the foot of the gravel driveway, Jon could see the phosphorescent glow of the Coleman lantern. Through the window, he saw his son Kurt playing solitaire.

"Hello, Kurt." Jon closed the rusty screen door behind him. It never stayed tightly shut and mosquitoes always ended up in the loft. Jon hated the loft as a child, but Kurt slept there now.

"Are you ready for the trip tomorrow?" Jon said as he took off his blue cotton hat covered with lures.

"Yeah, I guess so," said Kurt. "Can we play Monopoly before I go to bed?"

"Not tonight. I've got some articles to read for next week."

As Kurt started up the stairs toward the loft, Jon cleared his throat, "Kurt, Uh, I. Uh, I mean, do you wanna play a game? C'mon we can play a little Monopoly before bed. C'mon, just for a little while."

"O.K. Dad, I'll get the board!" Kurt ran up the stairs, tripping on the third step.

"Slow down. What'd I tell you about getting too excited. Now go get the game."

Kurt pushed himself to his feet. The maroon colored rug on the steps had scraped the knuckles of both his hands. Kurt slowly raised his left hand to his mouth, licking the thin line of blood from his knuckle. Turning slowly and deliberately, so as not to make the mistake of falling again; Kurt walked up the stairs without saying anything.

Walking carefully down the stairs in his stocking feet, Kurt raised his head above the box, looking at his father before placing the fame on the stained wood of the kitchen table.

Without saying anything, Jon uncrossed his arm and removed the lid of the boardgame.

"I like the racecar, Dad. Can I use it?"

"Kurt, you always play too much with the racecar. You drive it all over the board, even when it's not your turn. You wrecked the game the last time you used the car." Kurt reluctantly took the thimble that his father handed to him. He ran the thimble slowly over the drying blood on his knuckles as his father counted out the proper amount of money for Kurt.

"Dad, I like the fives. They're pink, I like pink. Can I only have fives?"

"Damn it Kurt. You always ask that, and I always tell you

'No.' You can't play the game right if you only use fives."

"Dad, I'm kinda thirsty. Could I have a glass of milk?"

"You're big enough to get it. Get me a scotch and water while you're up, please. You know the big bottle with the 'J' and 'B' on it."

Kurt carefully got out of the wooden chair and walked across the knotty floor to the fridge.

"And no playing around...We have to get up early tomorrow, you know. If we get an early start, the fishing will be better."

As Kurt opened the door to the fridge, he noticed that there wasn't much milk left. He took the light jug and the Perrier out of the fridge and placed them over on the counter. The cupboard door was really sticky. Kurt struggled to open it, his arms shaking and beginning to burn before the door finally swung open and thudded against the kitchen wall.

"Jesus! Take it easy over there."

Kurt took out two Jack Daniel's glasses from the cupboard, placing them on the counter next to the milk and Perrier.

The J&B, along with the other liquid was always kept in the bottom cabinet. Kurt bent down on one knee and forced the cabinet open. He hated the acrid smell of moth balls and alcohol that the open door released. Kurt struggled with the heavy green bottle, raising it to the formica counter top with everything else. He poured the milk first; it only reached to the bottom of the Jack Daniels label on the glass. Next came the scotch and water. Jon looked up from the two piles of money, "You remember how to do it, Kurt. J&B to the top of the black label and water the rest of the way. Let's hurry up now, I'm starting to get tired."

Kurt walked slowly back to the table, the liquid in his father's glass slopping back and forth, dangerously close to the edge. Jon hastily took the drink when Kurt was finally within his reach.

"O.K. Kurt, you go first."

The dice were on the opposite side of the board from Kurt. He shot his left hand toward them, grazing the half-filled milk glass with his forearm. Before he could grab the glass with his right hand, the

milk spilled down onto the Monopoly board.

"God-damn it, Kurt! I told you to be careful." Jon shot out his right hand, grabbing the arm that had spilled the milk.

"Look what you've done. You wrecked the whole game." Jon's grip on his son's arm tightened until Kurt began to wince.

"Ow, Dad! Oww!!"

"Look at that. The board is all wet! We can't play now."

Kurt looked down at the board as the small river of milk washed across the purple rectangle of Baltic Ave., past the orange Chance cards. His eyes were beginning to sting and blur. Kurt shoved his chair backward, making a grinding noise across the knotted pine floor, and ran up the maroon colored steps to his room.

The morning air was cold as Kurt and his father walked toward the dock.

"It's a good thing we brought the sweatshirts this year," said Jon, "these mornings are always colder than you remember them."

Jon placed the tackle box, bait and rods carefully into the boat.

"Get in, Kurt. I'll push off."

Jon unfastened the rope and steadied himself in the boat. After placing the oars fastidiously into the locks, Jon shoved off. The force of the oars made ripples in the glass-green lake. Jon rowed in silence until his shoulders began to burn.

"I guess this is good," Jon said as he dropped the concrete-filled milk container and rope into the water.

Jon and his son baited hooks and cast off lines off of each side. The water was smooth again and yellow glare of the sun was almost totally over the green treeline.

"Dad, can we play Monopoly again, tonight?" asked Kurt as he rubbed his left eye with his free hand.

"Maybe son. We'll see."

Kurt's bobber began to make ripples. Then it made ripples again.

"You've got a bite. You've got one..."

As Kurt grabbed the rod with both hands, the bobber plunged deeply into the dark, green water.

"Reel it in. Reel it in!"

"I'm trying," said Kurt as his White Sox hat fell to the boat's floor.

"You'll let him get away," his father said in an increasingly sharper tone. "Here, hold the wrist stiff. Like this," said Jon as he firmly took hold of Kurt's forearm.

"Aahh," winced Kurt as he lunged his body backward, dropping his pole into the water. Jon looked at his son as he rolled up his sleeve of his grey sweatshirt, revealing a large, purple bruise.

"I'm sorry," Jon stammered, "I forgot son. I'm sorry."

"I want to go back." Kurt's voice had that familiar shakiness. Jon recognized the shakiness. The shakiness was his and he had passed it on to Kurt like a pocket full of heavy sinkers.

"Here, let me re-bait your hook for you." Jon grabbed the submerged pole from the water outside of the boat.

"I can do it myself. I can d— Give it to me, I can do it!"

"Fine, take it. Here!" Jon shoved the dripping wet pole in Kurt's direction. "Here, you might need this, too." Jon pushed the muddy styrofoam bait container with his work boot across the aluminum boat-bottom.

Kurt stared at Jon. Jon couldn't tell exactly what Kurt was thinking. Jon new the look, though. Jon knew how the look made him feel. The look made him feel like he was a criminal; like he'd just pushed Kurt's head down to the aluminum boat-bottom with his hard, tan work boots. Jon could feel the tight, constrictive pinch of the too-tight laces against his ankles.

"I don't want to fish anymore. I want to go back." Kurt had a muddy worm in between his fingers. The worm wasn't wriggling. It looked dead. The limp worm was the same dark maroon color as the crusting scabs on Kurt's knuckles.

"Come on. Let's stay for just a little while. Come on, son."

Jon could see that Kurt's eyes were filling up. Kurt was beginning to crush the muddy worm in his fingers. The worm didn't wiggle. As a single drop slid down his cheek, Kurt pushed his hand against his face in a stiff arc. The arc of his hand left a long, brown streak of mud down his right side of his face.

"Here. Let me help you. You've got mud all over your.."

"I don't care. I said I wanted to go back. I want to go back!"

"O.K. O.K., we'll go back. I'm sorry. I'm..."

Jon didn't finish the sentence; he just grabbed the oars stiffly and turned the boat toward the newly emerged raspberry-color of dusk.

Kurt looked down at his scabbed knuckles and the aluminum boat floor the whole way home. Jon's oars broke the smooth, green plane of the lake in silence.

As the boat came to the edge of the dock, Kurt grabbed his dripping White Sox hat and jumped out of the boat, running across the piney knot-holes without looking back at his father. Kurt ran across the soft pine needles and up the gravel driveway, forcing open the shaky door of the cottage.

Taking off his muddy, wet sneakers, he ran across the stain-darkened knots of the kitchen floor and slid to a stop at the abandoned Monopoly game on the table. Kurt grabbed the racecar and the milk-stained Chance cards and all the pink fives in his muddy, scabbed hand. Turning around in his stocking feet, Kurt crossed the stain-darkened floor of the kitchen, jumping from knot hole to knot hole and running up the maroon-colored stairs...

HOLLY THOMPSON

Returning from Jackson Hole, Wyoming

tonight we see the frog on the moon
through the lazy gray clouds moving like cautious deer

mist flies at our faces from the sulfurous geysers
on the volcanic plateau burning with steam

no, I am not ready to go and although we will
the Spirit stays thick in the paint pots
bubbling like boiling pudding

HOLLY THOMPSON

Shadows

shadows of skeletal branches creep in the snow
from the wind
biting with the sadness of a wake
the fresh white fall of snow glitters like quartz in granite
under the streetlight's orange glow
which reveals the descending flurries union
the falling flakes, chiseled off of the floating glaciers above
meeting the rising shades, gray mimics
from a mythical underworld
a world that froze the elephant's legs into the tree trunk
on the sidewalk across from the church
that parking lot of black and white limousines

an older man sits across from us
at the bar, with his head hung
like he is listening to his wheeze
he will stay this way the rest of the night
until someone nudges him

the flakes blur like lights
the whitening trees, antlers of the mythical underworld creatures
begin to sway in the wind
and bend under the freezing weight

MATT WOLEJKO

sitting off the beaches of the
islands, Caroline pens a postcard to
her love

the picture is typical of the region,
two beautiful honeymooners holding
hands, skipping

along the sealine
She remembers many years ago,
before motherhood, before disease

a time when all was young and new
and nobody could tell them differently
Now with a heavy hand she writes,
don't tell me where you're going, dear
i'd much rather bump into you accidentally

BRIAN SULLIVAN

Certain Sculptures

Be so cold
Pull your sleeve up strong
Hide your face away
Let your shadow fall alone
Please let go
To search through the stones
And find one like your own
That's been gone

Turn to leave
And leave me so cold
Try to find a life
Which is all that I suppose
Chip away
Your eyes hard to see
Are these shapes too familiar
To be me

Try to live
Wear your sleeve down long
Bear your skin to me
Let me wear your soul

Certain sculptures lean towards others
Certain sculptures move each other

SEAN O. KEHOE

Summer Ends Where Fall Begins (Lyrics by Bob Marley)

"I've got love Darling.
Love sweet love Darling, I'll play your favorite song Darling,
you can rock me all night long
Darling..."

Nester's poetic waves roll off the porch, one
with the cool, crisp October air

The now ages summer sun toils with heavy breath, hoping
to keep what once was.

Reminiscent, the mountain spring eased its flow, bringing
warmth, vibrant life filled light, a sense of
wholeness complete, and traveling circus love.

Days go by, running, knowing the end is near.
Evenings came, its circulus, frenzied pace tiring,
bringing canvassed clouds and pale orange backdrops.

The wondrous, flying trapeze was over,
reality awoke from a dream, confused
fear stole trust and she let go.

Against steadfast will, the trees succumbed.
The leaves give a final show, relieved to soon be at rest.
One by one, they gradually release
to be embraced by each own's vision
of the perfect wind.

B. JOHN STEPANIAN

Where Sour Turns To Sweet

But she said she was just a dandelion,
A heat flash summer oddity;
One who shines rarely with the dullest of weeds.

The problem was, she had no faith
in the dandelion.

"But it's a weed," she cried.

"But it's a flower," I said.

B. JOHN STEPANIAN

Beaufort, South Carolina

"Sally used to play with Hoola Hoops, now she tells her problems to therapy groups..." -John Prine

The bumbling cricket pang stretches far beyond,
The wasted summer sun. Fluttering moths
Careen nervously toward the heat rising.
The charred memory elapses; an onslaught
Of ideas engrossing enough to douse the flame,
Leave all stagnant.

The auction was a success. Daddy is now dead.
The fermented cider still avails though;
We slowly get drunk and swat mosquitoes.
As the sun sets red, the sobs os mama reverberate
Through tinted glass and high rise city shafts;
Shatterproof, sound proof, lifeless.
They step, breaking into backbone dance
As I drink, and mama spits poison from tongue.
Sis, well, she just watches the moths
Wishing she too could have paper wings;
To be so light.

Wondering where they go
After they pass over the candle,
She retires inside.
Mama and I sit, battling the darkness
Dissipating into ash.

DIETER WESLOWSKI

MOTHER

I flood you with embraces,
but your arms do not come back
automatic.

Having witnessed the visible strain
between you & my youngest sister,
I wonder what kind of sheep

I would have been in the Family, fear
the color you may have painted me.

FERNANDO RUIZ GRANADOS

from Poemas de Brindisi
translated by Forrest Gander

Clouds

Heavy

clouds

sail

assembling themselves

and disassembling

Forms

in search of form

words of mist

finding their form

only to

disappear

The high and tenuous

constructions

of the sky

advance

The wind runs

to its job

impulsively

it transforms everything

look at the wind's games

the world is not its mirror

Clouds

colossal inventions

brought on by rain

Disintegration

of feeling

Weightless mountains

aerial islands

eternal creation

and recreation

signs of light

HOLLY THOMPSON

in the eyes of infinity
perhaps we are mere shadows in the night
when the next day is created
we no longer exist

CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

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John Stepanian, "Thanks for the sorcery". DOUGHTY...

Holly Thompson is a senior Humanities major. She's known to wander.

Matt Wolejko is a freshman Philosophy major from Lunenburg, MA.

Vomit God was born somewhere along Route 66 and spent his early years cleaning the windshields of moving cars. Becoming increasingly sick with violence in American society, he fled the country. After an extensive tour of the Arctic Circle, he relocated in Zimbabwe where he befriended a misplaced herd of Duck-Billed Platypi and became their protector. Severely stricken simultaneously with lock-jaw and gangrene, Vomit God returned to the U.S. and after several years of treatment he managed a full recovery. Upon receiving word that his herd of Platypi had been trampled to death by disgruntled water buffalos, Vomit God moved to Idaho where he joined the ranks of a group of nomadic poet-cows. As an initiation prank, the cows force fed him potatoes until he entered a month long bout of vomiting. Upon recovery, Vomit God was horrified to learn that the mere mention of the words "potato" and "horse radish" caused him to relapse into violent fits of vomiting. His so called friends delighted in this discovery and spared no opportunity to torment him. There was no end to his horror. Vomit God fled to Colorado and was last seen being mauled by a grizzly bear. The fact that his poetry and short stories continue to surface suggests that Vomit God survived the attack and now lives a life of quiet isolation somewhere on the West coast, or perhaps Canada. Repeated attempts to contact him have failed.

Fernando Ruiz Granados is a Mexican poet, author of *Poemas de Brindisi* and *Agua de Piedra*.



Infinitive

To see through the window
and the dark reflection of yourself –

to see through your father, raking
leaves beyond the window. To see

beyond the rake, and the leaves
beyond father. Through

the rake, through the leaves,
and the trees farther beyond

growing hard against
the white opaque of sky.

—Mike Perrow